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ABSTRACT

This volume of papers includes 21 of the 38 presentations given at the Forum on Global Change and Our Common Future. The objectives of the forum were threefold: (1) to present to the public a balanced and authoritative view of the wide range of global change issues, including the science of the earth system, the impacts of global change on society, and the implications for public policy; (2) to describe developments in the emerging interdisciplinary approach to the study of the earth system, aimed toward developing the knowledge base on which rational public policy decisions on global change can be pursued; and (3) to delineate the social, political, and economic framework within which the scientific and technological issues and the policy options need to be explored. Presentations include the following: (1) "Toward a Global Environmental Policy"; (2) "Global Change and Our Common Future: The Benjamin Franklin Lecture"; (3) "Global Change and Carrying Capacity: Implications for Life on Earth"; (4) "The Earth System"; (5) "Mission to Planet Earth Revisited"; (6) "Historical Perspectives: Climatic Changes Throughout the Millennia"; (7) "Mathematical Modeling of Greenhouse Warming: How Much Do We Know?"; (8) "The Earth's Fragile Ozone Shield"; (9) "Terrestrial Ecosystems"; (10) "Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change"; (11) "The Human Causes of Environmental Change"; (12) "What Does Global Change Mean for Society?"; (13) "Impacts of Future Sea Level Rise"; (14) "Threats to Biological Diversity as the Earth Warms"; (15) "Deforestation and Its Role in Possible Changes in the Brazilian Amazon"; (16) "Impacts of Global Change"; (17) "The Global Environment: A National Security Issue"; (18) "Implications for Public Policy: Options for Action"; (19) "View from the North"; (20) "View from the South"; (21) "Political Leadership and the Brundtland Report: What are the Implications for Public Policy?"; and (22) "Global Warming: Is It Real and Should It Be Part of a Global Change Program?". A copy of the program for the forum and a list of the committee members are appended. (KR)